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limitations of independent claims 2, 7 and 13, the remarks will initially address the limitations in the independent subcombination claims.

As originally filed, claim 2 was particularly directed to a keyboard including a plurality of letter keys arranged in rows, with at least one of the rows of letter keys being arranged to spell out "at least two, multi-letter words when read from left to right." This claim was rejected based on the teachings in Russo (U.S. Patent No. 5,336,002) in view of Choate (U.S. Patent No. 5,352,050). In making this rejection, the Examiner referenced the words "IHOT" in Choate. However, as indicated above, claim 2 as originally presented required the referenced row of letter keys to spell out at least two, multi-letter words. Clearly "I" is not a multi-letter word. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the combination presented to reject claim 2 was inappropriately applied. This same argument holds with respect to combination claim 1.

Although the application of prior art against these independent claims may simply have been a minor oversight, the Applicant is at a greater loss in understanding how many of the dependent claims are being met. For instance, the Applicant could find no basis or any remarks presented in the Office Action as to how the specific three words recited in claim 5 have been rejected. In any event, in order to further the prosecution in this application, claim 2 has been amended to further specify that the two, multi-letter words are arranged consecutively in the row. Therefore, this claim now requires one of the rows to spell out at least two multi-letter words which have to be consecutively arranged when read from left to right. Clearly, the preferred embodiment having the multi-letter words "READ ON THIS" meets this limitation. Therefore, in summary, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art clearly fails to address the limitations of these claims as originally filed and is even further distinguished from the claims as amended. Certainly, this amendment to the claims would not necessitate the Examiner changing any rejection on this set of claims.

With respect to independent claim 7, this claim is directed to the central location of the backspace and tab keys and has been indicated to be anticipated by Russo, U.S. Patent No. 5,336,002 wherein the Applicant's particular attention has been drawn to Figures 1, 13 and 16. In Figure 1 of Russo, backspace key 132 and tab key 133 are located in upper left hand corner portion of the keyboard. In the embodiment of Figure 13, the backspace and tab keys (not labeled) are located in an upper right hand corner of the basic array of letter keys although, arguably, these keys are somewhat, centrally located with respect to the overall keyboard housing. To address this potential interpretation of the claimed subject matter, claim 7 has been amended to specify that both the tab and backspace keys are centrally located within the letter keys. This is clearly shown with respect to tab key 72 and backspace key 74 in Figure 2 of the present application. Clearly, none of the prior art shows this type of arrangement which was intended by the originally filed claims. It should be noted that, even taking the interpretation utilized by the Examiner, the features recited in many of the dependent claims originally presented in this set of claims are not seen to be found in the prior art. Particularly, the relative location between the tab and backspace keys, the location of the tab and backspace keys in the home row and the location of these keys from the top of the base. As changing the location of the keys can significantly alter the use of the keyboard, it is submitted that each and every repositioning of a key can be an important change that requires a teaching in the art for a proper rejection thereof. In any event, based on the manner in which claim 7 has been amended, it is respectfully submitted that this claim is now quite distinct from the known prior art. Again, correspondingly, independent claim 1 has been amended in a similar fashion.

Finally, with respect to independent claim 13, this claim is directed to the arrangement of the plurality of shift keys and has been amended to provide further specifics concerning the shift keys. That is, in addition to stating that the shift keys are located in a lower central portion of the array, claim 13 has been amended to specify that these keys are grouped directly adjacent one another and extend in at least two of the

multiple rows. Furthermore, claim 13 has been limited to specify that the shift keys are adapted to be engaged by thumbs of a user. This limitation is seen to provide further specifics concerning the position of the shift keys relative to the remainder of the keys on the keyboard. Although Russo U.S. Patent No. 5,336,002 as applied to claim 13 does include multiple shift keys adjacent one another, these keys do not extend in multiple rows. In addition, since the Russo patent is specifically directed to a one-handed keyboard, the shift keys could not be located in a position adapted to be engaged by thumbs of a user. Due to the changes made to claim 13, claim 16 has been limited to specify that the shift keys are arranged in only two different rows on the keyboard.

Again, the limitations in the dependent claims are not seen to be met in any of the applied prior art, even as originally filed. For instance, claim 18 requires that two of at least three separate shift keys perform identical functions. This claim is stated to be anticipated by the '002 Russo patent. However, keys 148 and 150 or 248 and 250 do not perform identical functions. A thorough reading of this patent will substantiate this argument. In fact, a simple review of the drawings showing how these keys are labeled differently supports this position. In any event, as amended, it is submitted that claim 13 is in clear condition for allowance over the known prior art such that allowance of this claim, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, is requested. Again, the same changes have been made to combination claim 1.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above remarks, and the amendments made to the claims, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in this application are now be in clear condition for allowance over the known prior art. Therefore, allowance of the claims and passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested. If the Examiner should have any

additional concerns regarding the allowance of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided below if it would further expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. G. Diederiks, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Everett G. Diederiks, Jr.

Attorney for Applicant

Registration No. 33,323

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DIEDERIKS & WHITELAW, PLC

12471 Dillingham Square, #301

Woodbridge, VA 22192

Tel: (703) 583-8300

Fax: (703) 583-8301

I CLAIM:

1. (Once Amended) A keyboard for use in performing typing tasks comprising:
a base having an upper side; and
a plurality of keys arranged in an array, including multiple rows, on the upper side of said base, said keys including letter keys, a tab key, a backspace key, a plurality of shift keys and at least one function key, each of said letter keys corresponding to a respective letter of an alphabet of a language, wherein said plurality of shift keys are located in a lower central portion of said array, **grouped directly adjacent one another, and arranged in at least two of the multiple rows, said plurality of shift keys being adapted to be engaged by thumbs of a user,** wherein one of said rows includes selected ones of said letter keys arranged to spell out at least two, **consecutively arranged** multi-letter words when read from left to right and wherein both the tab and backspace keys are centrally located within the [array] **letter keys**.
2. (Once Amended) A keyboard for use in performing typing tasks comprising:
a base having an upper side; and
a plurality of keys arranged in an array, including multiple rows, on the upper side of said base, said keys including letter keys, a tab key, a backspace key, at least one shift key and at least one function key, each of said letter keys corresponding to a respective letter of an alphabet of a language, wherein one of said rows includes selected ones of said letter keys arranged to spell out at least two, **consecutively arranged** multi-letter words when read from left to right.
3. The keyboard according to claim 2, wherein the language is English and the selected ones of said keys are selected from the group consisting of "R", "E", "A", "D", "O", "N", "T", "H", "I" and "S".
4. The keyboard according to claim 2, wherein the selected ones of said letter keys spell out three words when read from left to right.

5. The keyboard according to claim 4, wherein the language is English and the three words comprise “READ”, “ON” and “THIS”.
6. The keyboard according to claim 5, wherein the one of said rows constitutes a home row in which fingers of a typist are adapted to be placed in an at rest condition.
7. (Once Amended) A keyboard for use in performing typing tasks comprising:
a base having an upper side; and
a plurality of keys arranged in an array, including multiple rows, on the upper side of said base, said keys including letter keys, a tab key, a backspace key, at least one shift key and at least one function key, each of said letter keys corresponding to a respective letter of an alphabet of a language, wherein both the tab and backspace keys are centrally located within the [array] letter keys.
8. The keyboard according to claim 7, wherein the tab key and the backspace key are located in the same row.
9. The keyboard according to claim 8, wherein the tab key is located to the left of the backspace key.
10. The keyboard according to claim 9, wherein the tab key is located directly adjacent the backspace key.
11. The keyboard according to claim 7, wherein the array includes a home row, both of said tab and backspace keys being located in a row above the home row.

12. The keyboard according to claim 11, wherein the tab key and the backspace key are located in a third row down from a top of said base.
13. (Once Amended) A keyboard for use in performing typing tasks comprising:
 - a base having an upper side; and
 - a plurality of keys arranged in an array, including multiple rows, on the upper side of said base, said keys including letter keys, a tab key, a backspace key, a plurality of shift keys and at least one function key, each of said letter keys corresponding to a respective letter of an alphabet of a language, wherein said plurality of shift keys are located in a lower central portion of said array, **grouped directly adjacent one another, and arranged in at least two of the multiple rows, said plurality of shift keys being adapted to be engaged by thumbs of a user.**
14. The keyboard according to claim 13, wherein said plurality of shift keys includes at least three separate shift keys.
15. The keyboard according to claim 14, wherein the plurality of shift keys includes four adjacent shift keys.
16. (Once Amended) The keyboard according to claim 14, wherein said plurality of shift keys are arranged in **only** two different rows on the keyboard.
17. The keyboard according to claim 14, wherein said at least three separate shift keys are color coded.
18. The keyboard according to claim 14, wherein two of said at least three separate shift keys perform identical functions.
19. The keyboard according to claim 13, wherein at least one of said plurality of shift keys constitutes a lower most key in the array.